

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000447

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, NEA/ARP, NEA/PPD, PA, INR/NESA
STATE FOR IIP/G/NEA-SA, INR/B
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH, PARIS FOR O'FRIEL
USDOC FOR 4520/ANESA/ONE/FITZGERALD-WILKS
USDOC FOR ITA AND PTO/OLIA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KU](#) [KDMR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - IRAQI ELECTIONS; FEBRUARY 1

Summary

1. Kuwait TV reports on the Iraqi elections ran as a second lead due to the competing news of security operations against militants in Kuwaiti City. Editorials continue to praise the election process, which took place despite "threats of terrorism." Only one columnist voiced pessimism believing that the United States is trying to consolidate its power through the Iraqi elections. End summary.

Kuwaiti TV

2. Iraqi elections ran as the second lead story on February 1 due to Kuwait's security operations against terrorists. A quarter hour of straight reporting on the "historical" elections of Iraq as aired.

3. From Iraq: Reports from areas in Iraq (Karkouk, Basra, and Baghdad) were filed showing Iraqis celebrating after casting their votes. The TV moderator summarized saying: "Iraqis celebrate their election 'wedding.' ...After these hard times, the Iraqi people will have to wait for another two weeks to receive the results."

4. From London: The TV news reported on Tony Blair's speech about the elections and on Parliament's debate about the timing of withdrawal of British troops.

5. From Washington: An interview with editor-in-chief of Al-Hayat also focused on troop withdrawal and requisite "next steps." He said: "The new government will have to make agreements with the UK and the U.S. regarding the future relationship and to demonstrate that the fall of Saddam and their intervention actually has brought in democracy."

6. From the UN: In addition, a translated report on Kofi Anan's speech on the Iraqi elections stated: "The UN is ready to help the Iraqis after the election results are ready."

Block Quotes

7. Dr. Badriya Al-Awadhi wrote in independent Al-Qabas: "The sight of Iraqi women, with smiles on their faces, from various regions submitting their votes while standing next to the men, even with the threat of terrorism, proves to Arab regimes the need to give each Arab his right to participate in choosing those who represent him in elections without that fear or oppression used in the days of Saddam and that still exists in a number of Arab countries. Maybe the experience of free and noble Iraqi elections will set a democratic precedent for Arab countries to respect the human right of each Arab in freely choosing, without fear or terrorist ideology, which political party governs him."

8. Liberal columnist Ali al-Baghli wrote in independent Al-Qabas: "The Iraqi elections are a blow to all those who are enemies of democracy in the Arab world and especially in Iraq where a 65 percent voter turnout demonstrates the thirst Iraqis have for the mere smell of democracy after the nightmare of the Baathist party. As for Sunni who decided to boycott the elections, that is their business; but to all those who bet on the failure of the Iraqi elections, we say: "Die of Envy."

9. Dr. Jassem Al-Fuhaid wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-A'am: "The reality is that the United States' insistence on holding the Iraqi elections on January 30 was meant to consolidate her supremacy and ratify its process of democratizing the new Iraq. The (real) issue was not about securing polling stations, but in providing a secure democratic climate where electoral nominees could freely circulate among the electorate. The United States' failure to set a specific timetable for expanding security in Iraq was the main reason for her refusal to postpone the elections. Having staged elections at this tense and gloomy period does not

solve the Iraqi problem."

10. Dr. Abdullah Sahar, Kuwait University political science professor and moderate Islamist wrote in Al-Anba: "All Iraqi political powers will, without a doubt, be affected in varying degrees by the outcome of and the implications the Iraqi elections on the region and the entire world. The victorious party will gain legitimate authority to deal with the political powers in the "center" and outside of Iraq. This will enable the winning party to have a clear vision for the future and three options: to cooperate; to rebel; or, to adopt a marginal role without directly tackling Iraqi reality. This is why the United States and Iran, even though they appear to be adopting opposite positions toward Iraq and other affairs, are in agreement about the necessity of holding elections in Iraq. Kuwait also sees the need for a representative democratic regime in Iraq, provided that it is a peaceful one that respects her autonomy."

11. Ibarhim Al-Thuwaini wrote in independent Al-Anba: "The Iraqi people are waging a decisive battle against terrorism and the remnants of the Ba'ath party and other factions which deny freedom and democracy to Iraq. Every voting ballot cast by an Iraqi citizen is a "fatal bullet" to the enemies of freedom and dictators. The campaign of terror will not succeed in "repeating history" in Iraq. The will of the people in Iraq will guarantee them a new Iraq: one with dignity in which it will be able to coexist peacefully with neighboring countries and to take its rightful place in the international community."

12. Liberal and pro-government columnist Ahmad Al-Jarrallah wrote in independent Al-Seyassah: "Iraqis are now free and democracy has been returned to the people of Iraq. When President Bush described the elections in Iraq as a 'resounding success,' he meant 'the political tsunami' which established a link between the operation to liberate Iraq and its ultimate objective of freedom. The election has succeeded in giving Iraq back to its people. At the same time, these elections created tidal waves, which will flood the entire region with ideas about democracy, freedom, and human rights. Iraqis have now won their self-rule and are teaching other people the concepts of law just as in the days of Hammurabi, the man of law."

LeBaron